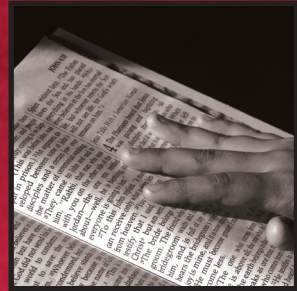


Catholic Education in British Columbia



CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS BRITISH COLUMBIA

Where Faith And Knowledge Meet



Introduction

Catholic schools participate in the Church's evangelizing mission of bringing the Gospel to all people. They are places for evangelization and as ecclesiastical institutions, they are "the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out."

History of Catholic Education

Catholic schools in British Columbia were started in the middle 1800's by the Sisters of St. Ann with the opening of St. Ann's Academy in Victoria and Kamloops. Several years later, in 1861, St. Mary's Mission School was founded by Father Leon Fouquet of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Today, religious orders continue to play a dominant role in the Catholic education system of British Columbia.

In 1872, a year after British Columbia entered Confederation, the first Common School Act was passed. Although Catholic schools had been present for several decades, the Act failed to recognize their existence. Over the next decade, Bishop Paul Durieu, an Oblate, wrote to the provincial government requesting recognition of Catholic schools. His cause was joined by Bishop Louis-Joseph d'Herbomez, but to no avail. In 1930, Archbishop William Mark Duke of the Archdiocese of Vancouver (the Archdiocese extended to the Alberta border, including the present Diocese of Nelson and

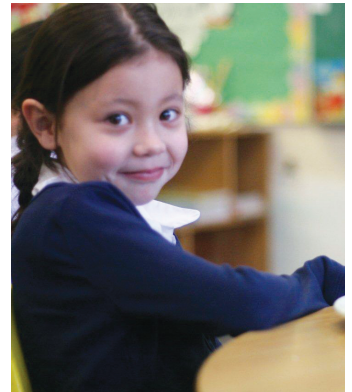
Kamloops) similarly requested recognition of Catholic schools. Some years later, the Rowell Commission on Education, established by the federal government, concluded that the provincial government was unfairly treating Catholic schools. Despite this report, the provincial government steadfastly refused to recognize independent schools.

Over the next decade, Catholic schools continued to survive without any form of government assistance until finally, in 1950, two Catholic schools (Our Lady of Fatima and Our Lady of Lourdes) in Maillardville formed a joint commission and deliberately closed to protest the government's lack of recognition of Catholic schools. The government refused to budge from its policy. Both schools reopened a year later and continued their struggle for recognition.

However, that same year, a small milestone was reached when the government was petitioned by Catholics for school textbooks, the right to ride public school buses, taxation to be removed from school property and health services. Of these requests, the government agreed only to lend textbooks, but not to schools; only directly to the students themselves. The government remained steadfast in its stand against Catholic schools.

In the early 1950's, the first mass movement of the laity started with the formation of the *British Columbia Catholic Education Association (BCCEA)*. In 1954, the Bishops of British Columbia presented the newly elected provincial government with a brief for support, but again without success. On the national front, the BCCEA was lobbying the Federal Health Minister for medical health services. Its argument was based on the fact that the provincial government was distributing federal money only to public schools. Later that year, Catholic schools received, for the first time, health services.

In 1957, yet another lobby was made to the provincial government; this time for removal of taxation on school properties outside Vancouver (Vancouver schools had already won zero taxation) and the right to ride public school buses. As a result, the provincial



government allowed municipalities the right to exempt school properties from taxes, but only if the school was operated by a non-profit society. From this change in government position, the Diocesan Societies were born. Each Diocese formed a non-profit society that operated in an identical manner. These societies continue today in the five dioceses, and their governance practice has evolved over time.

The sixties and early seventies saw Catholic schools survive several changes in provincial government. In 1966, a historic meeting was held in the library of Corpus Christi School in Vancouver. Bishop Remi De Roo and eleven other independent school representatives formally founded the *Federation of Independent Schools Association (FISA)*. The Association was formed as the political arm of independent schools of the province. Catholic school delegates to FISA were elected by the *Catholic Schools Trustees Association of British Columbia – CSTA (BC)*.

In the late seventies, after many years of lobbying, the government passed the Independent Schools Support Act (1977). The Act provided Independent Schools with financial aid that amounted to a maximum of 30% of the per capita grant to public schools. The Independent Schools Act (1989) increased provincial funding operating grants to a maximum of 50% of the per capita grant to public schools. In April 1983, the CSTA (BC) was dissolved and the FISA delegates were elected by an inter-society committee of the five Catholic dioceses. This committee was known as the *Catholic Public Schools Inter-Society Committee (CPSISC)*. In 1997, after the diocesan schools changed their names to reflect that they were independent schools, the inter-society committee changed its name to the *Catholic Independent Schools Committee of British Columbia (CISCBC)*.

After over a century of struggle, Catholic schools of British Columbia were recognized educationally and financially by the provincial government. Today, Catholic schools play a vital role in the educational landscape of the province and are now widely recognized by governments, public provincial education groups and other stakeholders in British Columbia education.



Special Needs Education

Catholic schools serve the needs of Catholic families who practice their Catholic faith, and other non-Catholic students enrolled. Since the early eighties, Catholic schools within the province have served children of all abilities as far as is possible within the mandate of the schools. In the five dioceses, schools have developed support services to meet the needs of their pupils. In September 2005, the Ministry of Education increased funding of special needs students enrolled in independent schools to the same levels as public schools. Special needs students include a full range of students including those students with moderate/profound intellectual disabilities, students with physical disabilities or chronic health impairments, students with visual impairments, students with autism spectrum disorder, or students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Also included are students requiring intensive behaviour interventions.



Service to the Community

Within each of the five dioceses in British Columbia, Catholic schools play a vital role in serving the communities in which they are located. Each school is an integral part of a larger community that includes municipalities, parishes and many communal organizations. Students of Catholic schools reach out to their communities, participating and supporting programs for the needy, aged and sick. These essential services are driven by being witnesses not only to Christ as the cornerstone of the whole community, but also by the recognition that everyone in a community has to be a positive contributor for our society to continue to grow. Developing Christian leaders is essential to the philosophy of all Catholic schools.

Academic Excellence

Catholic schools provide a holistic education, which combines academic excellence with concern for the spiritual, moral, social, emotional, cultural and physical growth of the students. Thus, it fulfills its mandate from parents, Ministry of Education, and the Catholic Church, whose mission it shares through the ministry of teaching.

This quality education is given in a faith-based community where teachers, students and parents come to know and love Jesus Christ as they grow together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and love based on Gospel values in the tradition of the Catholic Church.

Inspection

All independent schools in British Columbia are regularly inspected by the Ministry of Education through full inspections and monitoring evaluations. These mandatory regulatory inspections ensure that independent schools offer a program of studies that meet the *Educational Standards Order* and the *Independent Schools Act (2012)*.

Financing

Catholic schools save the taxpayers of British Columbia hundreds of millions of dollars every year because they are only funded at half the rate that the government funds a similar public school. The other half of the cost of operating a Catholic school is received from tuition that parents pay, fundraising, subsidies from the Catholic Church and activities in the schools.

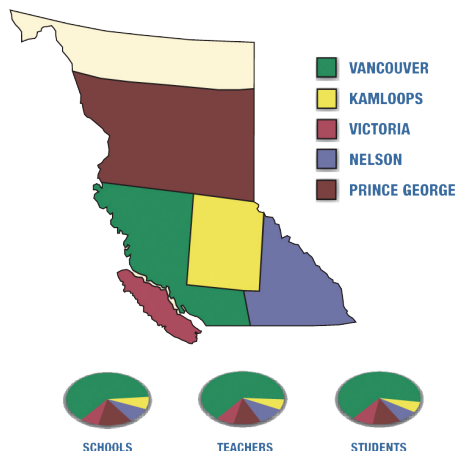
In addition, all capital costs of the school buildings and land in which the approx. 21,000 children (Catholic and non-Catholic) are educated are borne entirely by the Catholic community of the school because the provincial government does not provide any funding for capital expenses. The cost of the land, buildings and equipment of the 79 Catholic schools in the province would be staggering if the government had to become 100% fiscally responsible for them.



Fiscal Accountability

Taxpayers of British Columbia expect all schools, both public and independent, to be fiscally accountable. Catholic schools are in the unique position of having to be accountable to the three bodies from which they receive monies: government, church, and parents. The government ensures that the operational money it provides to Catholic schools is spent on that for which it was intended. The local Education Committee/Council of the school, consisting of the pastor and members of the lay community, develop and approve the school's annual operating budget. Financial statements are presented to the public each year at the school's Annual General Meeting. Schools are required to be audited each year by qualified external auditors who submit reports to the Ministry of Education as required by legislation. Members of the local governing body, commonly known as an *Education Committee/Council*, are elected to office to govern the school's operation and to ensure all aspects of *Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)* are met. Parents pay tuition fees and have therefore made a deliberate decision to send their children to the school that meets their family values and standards, despite extra costs.

The Dioceses



Archdiocese of Vancouver

The earliest recorded Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Vancouver was St. Mary's Mission School, founded by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The school was founded in 1861 with the boys' school opening in 1863 and the girls' in 1868. Father Florimond Gendre, OMI, was the first principal with the Sisters of St. Ann teaching the children. In 1888, the Sisters established St. Ann's Academy, the first Catholic School in Vancouver "on the edge of the forest" which is now downtown Vancouver, next to Holy Rosary Cathedral.

In 1957 the *Catholic Public Schools of Vancouver Archdiocese (CPSVA)* became registered as a non-profit society and thus became eligible for property tax reductions from municipal governments. Since that time, Catholic schools in the Archdiocese have grown to servicing over 17,000 young men and women in 41 elementary and nine secondary schools.

There are two types of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Vancouver: *Diocesan schools* which are operated by the Catholic Independent Schools Vancouver Archdiocese (CISVA) and *Non-diocesan Catholic schools* which are privately owned and operated; Little Flower Academy, St. Thomas More Collegiate and Vancouver College.



Holy Rosary Cathedral, Vancouver

Due to the high demand for Catholic education, most Catholic schools are full to capacity and have waiting lists. The Mission Statement of the CISVA states that our Catholic schools share in the mission of the Church to proclaim and build the Kingdom of God. We are committed to our Catholic identity and mission and the development of the whole child, and we strive to develop Christian leaders, responsible citizens, and life-long learners.



Diocese of Victoria

The first record of a school in the Diocese was in 1849 when the classes were taught by the resident priest, an Oblate missionary.

Catholic education has had a rich history on Vancouver Island, and dates back to the mid-nineteenth century when Modeste Demers, the first Bishop of Victoria, made a strong commitment to Catholic education by recruiting clergy and sisters to come to the west. Their involvement was probably the most significant aspect in the establishment of Catholic schools. The Sisters of St. Ann and clergy had a dream that envisioned providing an education rooted in the Catholic faith. They had a sense of purpose and determination and sparked the fires of Catholic education. A quote from a St. Ann's Academy prospectus in the early 1900's reads: "It is the aim of the Institution to train the heart as well as the mind of those under its care". Catholic schools yesterday and today remain committed to this philosophy of educating the whole person. Today there are 7 Catholic schools on Vancouver Island serving children in Victoria and as far north as Port Alberni. Island Catholic Schools follow the BC Provincial Curriculum and offer a program of religious education and community outreach based on gospel-centered values and the teachings and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church. While we have increased in size, the same challenge exists today as did 150 years ago: teachers in Catholic schools are called to prepare children for citizenship in this world and the next. Through their teaching and their actions, teachers invite students into an intimate relationship with God that will give them the grace they need to make life decisions based on Jesus' call to love and serve.



St. Andrew's Cathedral, Victoria



Sacred Heart Cathedral, Prince George



Diocese of Prince George

The first documented evidence of Catholic education shows that Bishop Buno, OMI, with the Oblate Fathers, Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto and Sisters of the Child Jesus began a school at Babine in 1914. This first school was soon followed by schools in Fort St. James and Prince Rupert in 1916.

Bishop Jordan, O.M.I., with the Sisters of St. Ann, Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton and Sisters of Providence opened schools in Prince George, Fort St. James and Dawson Creek.

In 1956 Bishop O'Grady, O.M.I. undertook the mission of building a system of Catholic schools to serve the native and non-native students of this missionary diocese. Assisted by Communities of Religious, his determination resulted in the birth of the Frontier Apostolate, a movement of dedicated Catholic volunteers from around the world.

Our eight Catholic Elementary Schools span the Diocese from Dawson Creek near the Alberta border to Prince Rupert on the coast.



Today our schools are staffed by committed lay women and men, several of whom attended our schools in their youth.

The Catholic Independent Schools of the Diocese of Prince George share in the saving mission of the Church by fostering faith formation and academic excellence. With Jesus Christ as our model, and within the context of our faith community, we strive to educate our youth in a holistic way. In collaboration with their families, we support their spiritual, intellectual, physical and emotional growth. This Christ centered foundation enables our youth to serve as disciples and to witness their faith in a global society.



Diocese of Kamloops

St. Ann's Academy in Kamloops has the distinction of being the longest, continually operating school in British Columbia. 2005 marked the 125th anniversary of the school. From the time St. Ann's Academy was established in 1880 until 1978, the school was administered by the Sisters of St. Ann (the Annie's). The Congregation of Christian Brothers administered the school, after the departure of the Sisters of St. Ann, until 2002. Today, the school, which was called "St. Ann's on the Hill" in its early days of the century, provides 'excellence in Catholic education' to students in grades K-12. The school is administered and staffed by lay people.



Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish, Kamloops

The city of Kamloops also has a K-7 Catholic School on its North shore. Our Lady of Perpetual Help was established by Bishop Michael Harrington and administered by the sisters of St. Martha in 1962. This elementary school serves as a feeder school to St. Ann's Academy High School. In 1998, the Sisters of St. Martha left the community of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and from that time the school has been administered and staffed by lay people.

St. James School in Vernon was founded in 1957 by Monsignor Miles and Bishop Michael Harrington. The Sisters of St. Ann's were seconded to administer the school

in its early days. Today the K-7 school is administered and staffed by lay people.

Two smaller communities in the Diocese of Kamloops have elementary schools that serve smaller parishes. St. Ann's in Quesnel was established in 1986 and Sacred Heart School in Williams Lake was founded in 1992. Both of these schools were founded under the leadership of Bishop Lawrence Sabatini.

The Kamloops Diocese opened the first Distributed Learning (DL) Catholic School in British Columbia in September, 2011. *ASCEND Online* opened with programming for students from Kindergarten to grade12.

The schools in the Kamloops Diocese all have a common mission: to provide excellence in education in an environment that is enriched by our Catholic traditions and Gospel values. We continue to give recognition to all stakeholders who have contributed to the prosperous history of our Catholic schools.





Diocese of Nelson

Catholic schools in the diocese existed long before Pope Pius XI created the Diocese of Nelson in 1936. It was in 1859 that Rev. Charles Pandosy, OMI, established the first Catholic school in the Okanagan Valley. Some 40 years later, St. Eugene Mission in the East Kootenays came into existence and served the people in the area for a number of years. It was around the same time, in 1898, that the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace arrived in Nelson and opened a two-room boarding school and high school. The original schools opened in those early years are no longer in operation. A number of schools were re-established years later to serve the needs of the community and today seven schools are in operation throughout the diocese.

The Sisters of Charity of Halifax arrived in Kelowna and in 1939 started St. Joseph School with one kindergarten class. Today it offers kindergarten through grade seven (K-7). Bishop Johnson opened St. Joseph School (now called Holy Cross School) in Penticton with the Sisters of St. Anne in 1952. A year later, St. Michael's School (K-7) in Trail formally opened its doors on the existing property. Prior to that, it was run as a Catholic kindergarten, operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace in the hall of St. Anthony's Parish. By 1960, Kelowna was ready to expand and Immaculata Regional High School (8-12) was built on the St. Joseph School property under the leadership of Bishop Doyle. It wasn't until 1965 that St. Mary's School in Cranbrook as we know it today became a reality through the joint efforts of Bishop Doyle, St. Mary's Parish, and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch. St. Joseph School in Nelson (K-6) was able to reopen its doors as an elementary school in 1979. As the Okanagan continued to grow, two more elementary schools came into existence under Bishop Mallon's guidance. Holy Cross (K-7) in Penticton reopened in 1993 and the following year the newest school in the diocese, Our Lady of Lourdes (K-7) in West Kelowna, came on the scene. By 1995, Immaculata Regional High School had outgrown its space and a new site was established on KLO Road.



Cathedral of Mary Immaculate, Nelson



Schools of the diocese were originally staffed by religious orders of brothers, sisters and priests. Today lay people are employed who are supported by the religious of the area. In 1957, Bishop McCarthy established the Catholic Public Schools of the Nelson Diocese (CPSND) and a decision in 1998 saw the name changed to the Catholic Independent Schools of the Nelson Diocese (CISND). Catholic Education in the diocese remains strong and committed to its mission of, *"In partnership with home and Church, the schools of the diocese strive to educate the whole child with the Gospel message of Jesus Christ as its foundation."*

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At the beginning of the Third Millennium, all those involved in Catholic Education are called to build communities of faith and holiness. In partnership with the family and the parish, the Catholic school participates in the saving mission of the Church.

THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA